Saving Souls or Cultivating Minds? Missionary Crosby H. Wheeler in Kharpert

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A major debate among the leaders of the Protestant missionary movement in the United States in the nineteenth century centered on the proper limits of missionary activity. Should the missionaries confine themselves to "saving souls," that is, to preaching the Gospel; or did mission work require educating and teaching Western values as well? Those who argued that the essence of Protestant Christianity could be isolated from the layers of social, intellectual, political, and moral imperatives which were its usual accompaniments at home, were faced with the challenge of defining the essence of the faith in such a way as to make it meaningful to peoples of other cultures. On the other hand, those who believed that Western civilization was a necessary foundation for Protestant evangelism were opening themselves to charges of arrogance and cultural imperialism.[1]

The proponents of a civilizing function for missions found themselves advocating a large component of lay specialists—printers, tradespersons, doctors, and especially educators—in the mission stations, as well as proposing broad programs to address the social, economic, and educational needs of the people. Advocates of the narrower view would limit mission personnel to preachers or "evangelists," and would offer only the most minimal education as part of their programs.

Regarding the Ottoman Empire, the missionary debate pitted against each other two influential figures in nineteenth century American missions: Rufus Anderson, the foreign secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, who stressed the role of the missionary as preacher of the Gospel rather than as teacher, and Cyrus Hamlin, whose two decades as a missionary in Constantinople (Istanbul) had convinced him of the beneficial effects of education in general and higher education in particular, on the spread of Protestant Christianity.

The minimalist policy was developed in the late 1850s by Rufus Anderson, senior Foreign Secretary of the American Board of Commis-

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[1] An interesting discussion of the debate can be found in William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 15-42.

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sioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the major American missionary organization in the United States, headquartered in Boston. An official at the missionary headquarters since his graduation from Bowdoin College and then Andover Theological Seminary in 1822, he dominated official missionary policy until his retirement, first as Foreign Secretary in 1866 and then from the Board, itself, in 1875. Anderson's minimalist views reflected the conclusions he reached while serving for several decades at headquarters: The fact that Anderson had not served a single day in the field did not prevent him from devising and attempting to put into effect far-reaching policies.

The basic role of the missionary, in Anderson's view, was to preach. Schools should be limited to instruction in reading and writing the native languages, only enough to enable pupils to perceive the truths of the Bible. Students were to be limited to the families of the converted. Higher education was barred, as was instruction in English, both of which were considered by Anderson as unnecessary, expensive, and likely to raise the students above their station in life, leaving them dissatisfied and unfit for service with their people. Anderson believed that Christianity would bring with it a civilizing tendency, but he emphatically did not see it as the missionary's duty to interfere with established patterns of life and customs, even less to introduce advanced Western technology.[2]

Cyrus Hamlin, a graduate of Bowdoin College and Bangor Seminary, considered Anderson's policies as destructive to the achievements of the mission to the Armenians and as certain to hinder future progress. To him, education, along with the concomitant translation, publication, and distribution of printed material, was the most effective tool in reaching out to the Armenian population and influencing opinion. The American educational system, with its many innovative features, was greatly admired for its stress on a broad general education accessible to every person, for its inclusion of mathematics and the sciences as necessary to counter superstition and to understand God's creation of the world, and for its

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[2] The foreign secretary's views are best summarized in Rufus Anderson, *Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims* (New York: Scribner and Company, 1869). An analysis of their implications can be found in Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, pp. 77-90. Earlier support of the American Board for a broad range of missionary activities can be seen, for example, in the conclusion of the Prudential Committee Report to the Annual Meeting of the ABCFM on September 18-20, 1833, in Philadelphia, "The General Objects of the Board Stated," pp. 136-142.

accessibility to women.[3] Hamlin went so far as to devise ingenious ways (a bakery, laundry, and machine shop) to enable his poor students to earn a living while studying. Anderson's plan to limit education to the converted and their children, Hamlin pointed out, would drastically reduce opportunities to make progress among the Armenians. Nor could Hamlin envision a healthy Christian evangelical community without well-educated church members and leaders.

Hamlin believed strongly, as did Anderson, in the importance of education in the Armenian vernacular: "One's native language, his mother tongue, must be his chief instrument of thought and expression," he wrote.[4] In regard to higher education, Hamlin argued, it was impossible in the short run to translate all of the necessary textbooks and sourcebooks into Armenian, and thus the study of English was indispensable. In this debate Anderson held the power of the purse. The logic of his theory led the Board first to curtail funds for educational activities and finally, in 1862, to close the Bebek Seminary, an institution which had educated a generation of students, most of them Armenian. Many of the graduates were in service as preachers in the new Protestant churches being formed throughout Turkey, others were studying in Europe and the United States for advanced degrees in medicine, engineering, and diverse professions, and still others held prestigious positions in Constantinople. Ironically, it was the Americans who closed Bebek Seminary, an institution that the Armenian Patriarch had tried repeatedly but unsuccessfully to destroy. Anderson's policy was a repudiation of everything that Hamlin had worked so hard to build. But all of Hamlin's arguments were in vain; as he later noted in his memoirs, "Anderson was a man of great power, and his errors were proportionably injurious."[5]

It may be instructive in the light of this debate to investigate the experiences of a mission station in the Ottoman Empire which the Americans considered one of the most successful in the second half of the nineteenth century—the mission centered in eastern Anatolia, in the city and province of Kharpert [Harput, Harpoot], which, as most other Protestant institutions, serviced mainly the Armenian population. The development of the Kharpert mission is closely associated with the Rev. Crosby H. Wheeler,

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[3] The American missionaries' educational theories and practices are described in Frank Andrews Stone, *Academies for Anatolia: A Study of the Rationale, Program and Impact of the Educational Institutions Sponsored by the American Board in Turkey: 1830-1980* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), Chapter 1.

[4] Hamlin, *My Life and Times*, p. 211.

[5] Ibid., pp. 412-414.

D.D., who along with his wife, the former Susan Anna Brookings, spent forty years as an American missionary in Kharpert. The evolution of Wheeler's views, from advocating a simple evangelism accompanied by a minimal degree of education, to becoming a leading proponent and designer of a secondary and higher educational system, provides a useful illustration of the dynamics shaping a missionary program in an area far removed from the controlling influence of policy-makers in the United States. In Wheeler's case, local circumstances, the demands of an increasingly educated and sophisticated Armenian population, personal ambition, and political changes all combined to transform a narrow effort designed to "save souls" into a broad program to "cultivate Christian minds."

American Missionaries in Turkey

During the previous quarter of a century, beginning in 1831, a small but dedicated band of American Protestant missionaries had been working within the boundaries of present-day Turkey. The Americans had come to the Ottoman Empire in order to convert the Muslims and the Jews, but found it illegal under Ottoman law to proselytize among the former and unprofitable to work among the latter. The Christian population, however, particularly the Armenians, provided a fertile field. The warm reception given to the first missionaries by the Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople may have led the Americans to misinterpret a gesture of traditional Armenian hospitality as an openness to Protestant teaching. In any event, the missionaries were concentrated their initial activities on reform within the Armenian Apostolic Church. They justified their work by arguing that reformed Armenian Christians would become both co-workers in the process of evangelization and models for Muslims and Jews to emulate.

The first three American missionaries in Istanbul, William Goodell, H.G.O. Dwight, and William G. Schauffler, were governed by the missionary motto, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).[6] Since it was unthinkable that "every creature" would be knowledgeable in English, their first task had been to make the Gospel available in the local vernacular languages. In the case of the

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[6] All three of the early missionaries have recorded their experiences in their memoirs. See William Goodell, *The Old and the New; or the Changes of Thirty Years in the East* (New York: M.W. Dodd, 1853) and *Forty Years in the Turkish Empire: or, Memoirs of Rev. William Goodell, D.D.*, ed. E.D.G. Prime (New York: Robert Carter, 1877); H.G.O. Dwight, *Christianity Revived in the East; or, A Narrative of the Word of God Among the Armenians of Turkey* (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1850); and William G. Schauffler, *Autobiography of William G. Schauffler: For Forty-nine Years a Missionary in the Orient* (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph, 1887).

Armenians, this meant that the missionaries put aside the Classical Armenian language (*krapar*) used by the Church and the educated class, which was unintelligible to the average Armenian, and insisted instead upon making the gospel available in the languages actually used by the Armenians, i.e. Armeno-Turkish (the Turkish language written with Armenian letters) and the vernacular Armenian (*ashkharapar*).[7] Given the general lack of literacy at that time, an important first step was to devise instructional programs to teach the local population to read the vernacular languages. As the mission developed, the logical next step was the establishment institutions of higher education designed to train Armenian teachers and religious leaders, and for this purpose Cyrus Hamlin was assigned to the Ottoman Empire in 1839. Hamlin established Bebek Seminary, which became the beacon of the American missionary effort in the Ottoman capital as it grew in enrollment and influence.[8]

The initial results of the missionary activity among the Armenians were meager in statistical terms, but they appeared to be threatening enough to arouse the ire of the hierarchy of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The Patriarch of Constantinople, Matthew II, issued a sweeping excommunication in 1846 of Armenians sympathetic to Protestant teachings. This event dealt a serious blow to American hopes to effect a reformation within the established Armenian church, and it led to the organization of the first Armenian Protestant Church in the Ottoman capital that same year, as well as to the subsequent establishment of the Protestant community, or *millet*, in the Ottoman Empire in 1850. As has so often been the case in history, persecution strengthened the dissidents, and vast possibilities now opened before the missionaries to expand their activities, especially in the interior regions of the empire where large numbers of Armenians resided.[9]

It had been the educational opportunities offered by the American missionaries that provided the most powerful attraction for the Armenians living in Ottoman Turkey. Only in this way can be explained the success of the Protestant missions among the Armenians, a people who had clung to their ancient Christian faith, despite formidable obstacles, for more

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[7] See Barbara J. Merguerian, "The Armenian Bible and the American Missionaries: The First Four Decades (1820-1860)," *Armenia and the Bible: Papers Presented to the International Symposium Held at Heidelberg, July 16-19, 1990*, ed. Christoph Burchard (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), pp. 153-169.

[8] Cyrus Hamlin, *Among the Turks* (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1878) and *My Life and Times* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1893).

[9] This potential was recognized by the missionary leadership, for example in the report of the senior foreign secretary, "Urgent Needs of the Armenian Reformation," ABCFM Annual Report, 1853.

than fifteen centuries. The Armenian supporters of missions looked to the Americans as providers of an education that promised a more fulfilling life, both spiritually and materially, than the backwardness and stagnation that characterized conditions in the Ottoman Empire.

This is not to deny that the Protestant teaching, of a simple Christianity based on the direct relation between the individual and God, had a strong religious appeal to many Armenians. This teaching appealed particularly to a small group of reformers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries who sought to bring Armenian Christianity out of the lethargy into which it had fallen during the nation's lengthy subjugation to foreign conquerors. These reform-minded individuals, eager to make use of missionary resources in order to rejuvenate the Armenian Church, were among the first followers of the missionaries in Turkey. That the Protestant mission emphasized education in order to encourage the reading of the Bible made it all the more attractive to Armenians, whose love for and devotion to the Word of God were well recognized. But the Armenians' thirst for general enlightenment and the Americans' emphasis on a more narrow evangelism were to lead to painful misunderstandings in the coming decades.[10]

Wheelers: The First Ten Years in Kharpert

Ironically, however, at the very moment that the Protestants were poised to make great gains among the Armenians in Turkey, the ABCFM was shifting emphasis away from education and enlightenment to more simple "evangelism."

Joining the mission at this critical juncture in its history, Crosby Wheeler and his wife arrived in Constantinople, on the way to Kharpert, in time to participate in the debates that took place during the 1857 Annual Meeting of the mission. Having just left Boston, where he had probably been impressed with Anderson's point of view, Wheeler took direct issue with Hamlin and argued against higher education and against the teaching

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[10] A general account of the events of this period can be found in G.H. Chopourian, *The Armenian Evangelical Reformation: Causes and Effects* (New York: Armenian Missionary Association of America, 1972). The official history of the American Board is in William E. Strong, *The Story of the American Board: An Account of the First Hundred Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1910), and a detailed account of the Armenian mission from the American point of view is in Rufus Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Oriental Churches*, in two volumes (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1872).

of English.[11] Experience in the field, however, would eventually lead to major changes in Wheeler's views.

Kharpert, the name of both the city and the province, at that time was one of the most remote mission stations of the ABCFM; it took the Wheelers six and a-half months to make the trip there from Boston. A new mission, it had been established only two years earlier, in 1855, by George Dunmore, who had immediately recognized the possibilities of the site which was located on a hilltop bordering a plain with over 300 villages, most of them Armenian. For the romantics of the mission (and romanticism played an important role in missions), Kharpert was filled with biblical significance. It was often described, probably for the benefit of patrons at home, as the site of Eden; or if not Eden itself, Wheeler would say, perhaps the spot to which Adam and Eve had been driven when expelled from paradise. Although he was noncommittal regarding the native claim to be the oldest nation and to speak "the language of Noah," Wheeler was enthusiastic about the rich historical associations of the area and its medieval fortress.[12]

The illness of Dunmore's wife soon compelled him to return to the United States, but the Wheelers were fortunate to be joined by two missionary couples, with whom they developed close and congenial working relations—the Rev. Orson P. Allen and his wife Caroline (who was Crosby Wheeler's sister) and the Rev. Herman N. Barnum and his bride Mary (who, as the daughter of the missionary William Goodell, had lived most of her life in Turkey). These three couples formed a missionary circle that worked harmoniously for almost four decades and maintained an unusual consistency in their programs.

Political conditions were particularly auspicious for the development of the mission at this time. The victory of the British in the recently concluded Crimean War (1856) had raised high the reputation of the Americans, who were associated with the *Inglese* in the popular mind. The Turkish government, at the urging of the British, had issued the 1856 reform decree that pronounced, on paper at least, religious toleration. The isolation of the area (at the time it took an average of forty days to travel the 700 miles from Constantinople) was also a benefit in that it left the missionaries and the local people a measure of freedom from the dictates of both the Missionary Board and the Armenian Patriarch. The opening of the telegraph line between Istanbul and Kharpert in 1860 (part

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[11] James L. Barton, *Daybreak in Turkey* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1908), p. 186.

[12] Crosby H. Wheeler, *Ten Years on the Euphrates, or Primitive Missionary Policy Illustrated* (Boston: American Tract Society, 1868), pp. 54, 62.

of the communication system designed to connect London with Calcutta) provided a welcome direct contact with the outside world.

The first decade spent by Wheeler and the other Americans in Kharpert proved to be tremendously productive. Both by temperament and by training, Wheeler was equipped to make a major impact. A native of Hampden, Maine, and a graduate of Bowdoin College and Bangor Theological Seminary (coincidentally the same schools that Hamlin had attended), Wheeler was ordained in 1852 and served for four years as a pastor before volunteering for mission work.[13] His wife Susan had been a student at Mount Holyoke College, an institution which exercised a major impact on missions through the philosophy of its founder, Mary Lyon, and through the missionary work of so many of its graduates. Wheeler was a man of firm principles, but he also had a practical American bent of mind, often devising innovative approaches to unanticipated problems and willing to learn from experience. The Kharpert missionaries understood that American ways were not always superior to native customs. As Susan Wheeler wrote, with an appreciation for local tradition that was unusual among the missionaries,

> We were not sent to change the customs of the people, or to make sport of them because they were unlike our own. Our customs were just as strange to them as theirs were to us. In fact we did not go to Americanize the people; we soon learned that many of their customs were better for them than ours would be. . . . We learned after a while to appreciate the first Turkish word we heard, "Yawash" (Slowly).[14]

The local people were at first fascinated by Western dress and the way of life of the Americans, but at the same time they were skeptical, if not downright hostile, of their motives. References to stoning of the missionaries by the locals in the early days are frequent in the literature, as were other unfriendly acts: a common Kharpert prank was to dump dirty water from the housetops on the heads of the passing missionaries. Slowly, with persistence, especially as they became fluent in the Armenian language, the missionaries were able to take advantage of the curiosity of the local population in order to gain a hearing for their teachings. Any instrument

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[13] "Rev. Crosby H. Wheeler, D.D.," *Missionary Herald* (November 1896), pp. 440-442.

[14] Mrs. Crosby H. Wheeler (Susan Anna Brookings Wheeler), *Missions in Eden: Glimpses of Life in the Valley of the Euphrates* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1899), pp. 50-51.

would be used by the missionaries to attract attention. His spy glass, Wheeler wrote, was very effective in attracting the attention of a crowd and to make them listen to a sermon.[15]

The Protestant missionary insistence that every person can and should learn how to read was to have a revolutionary impact. The fundamental tenant of their evangelical faith, that salvation is to be gained on an individual basis by reading and following the truths found in the Bible, required a literate public. Wheeler later wrote that, when he arrived in Kharpert, probably not one in a hundred Armenians knew how to read.

> Our first effort, then, was to rouse all whom we met to a sense of the importance of learning this art, and of possessing a Bible. . . . We endeavored to attract the public attention by asking every man we met, "Do you know how to read?" It was sometimes amusing to witness the wonder and incredulity with which our assertion was received, that an adult man, and even a woman, can learn to do this. Then too the idea of doing it, even if possible, was to some ludicrous enough. "What! Am I to become a priest," exclaimed many a man, "that I should learn to read!"[16]

Despite initial misgivings, the local Armenians quickly found the prospect of learning how to read attractive. After studying the Armenian language himself, Wheeler organized a number of ways to spread literacy, many of them developed by earlier missionaries: Armenian was taught directly by the missionaries in their own small schools, by local women who learned how to read and were then encouraged to teach their children and their neighbors, and by small boys from the schools who were sent from house to house to teach reading (receiving from the missionaries one-fourth of a cent for every lesson). It was easy to teach Armenians to read, Wheeler boasted: "Our aim is not popular education, which, as we feel, would do harm rather than good . . . but to put the Bible into the hands of the people, and induce them to study and obey it."[17]

The missionaries began their evangelical work by holding religious services on the ground floor of a house they had acquired, but it soon became so crowded that a small, modest chapel was built, with rooms on the second floor for bible classes. Susan Wheeler proudly identified it as

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[15] Wheeler, *Ten Years*, p. 145.

[16] Ibid., pp. 114-115.

[17] Ibid., pp. 117, 120-121, 139.

the "first Protestant church in Armenia."[18] A primary school for boys having been already established, the vacated ground floor of the missionary home became the Female Seminary. Wheeler was particularly active in the distribution of religious literature. He claimed that in the first decade of his work he had sold 35,091 books, over and above many tracts, of which 11,607 were scriptures, 2,758 hymn books, and 7,315 educational primers.[19]

Wheeler insisted that the people, no matter how impoverished, should pay in money or in kind for books and services provided by the missionaries. The practice of some missionaries to give away Bibles, he wrote, encourages people to think that "on listening to it, they *do* rather than *receive* a favor, thereby hindering, rather than helping, the primary objects of missionary labors." Given the widespread poverty in the area, however, he often accepted small or token payments in kind; during school registration time his office was filled with "yarn, cloth, stockings, milk, *madzoon* (sour milk), household trinkets and heirlooms, eggs and squawking hens, which penniless mothers bring," he wrote.[20]

The aim of the missions, Wheeler argued, was "to seek the establishment of living independent churches, complete from the first in having pastors, and aiming at a speedy and complete independence of foreign aid."[21] Wheeler begged, cajoled, and preached to the small body of converts to establish churches and to raise funds to acquire chapels and to pay the salaries of pastors and teachers. Working with his American colleagues, he saw the Evangelical Church in Kharpert grow, along with small congregations in neighboring villages, until in 1865 a Kharpert Evangelical Union (an organization of churches) was established, with eleven churches, six pastors, and 325 members.[22] This organized network of Protestant churches provided the structure within which the educational program was developed.

Wheeler's pragmatic approach to problems can be illustrated in one of the most pressing issues facing the small Protestant communities, and one of the most difficult to solve: the preparation of clergy to lead the new

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[18] Armenia in this case meant that part of Anatolia which was historic Armenia. Susan Wheeler, *Missions in Eden*, p. 76.

[19] Wheeler, *Ten Years*, p. 121.

[20] Ibid., pp. 300-301; also, "Harpoot: Its Plain and Castle," *Missionary Herald* 84:8 (August 1888), p. 370.

[21] Wheeler, *Ten Years*, p. 301.

[22] "Eastern Turkey Mission," *Missionary Herald* 87:1 (January 1891), pp. 23-24. On its 25th anniversary, in 1890, the Evangelical Union had grown, but slowly, to include twenty-five churches and almost 2,000 members.

churches. The missionaries themselves had contributed to this problem. On the one hand they had concluded that Cyrus Hamlin's Bebek Seminary in Constantinople provided too exalted a level of education and that it left graduates unsatisfied with the salaries and the standard of living in the small villages and towns. On the other hand, Protestantism demanded educated clergy who could serve as leaders in the community, who could read and explain the Bible to parishioners, who could deliver effective sermons, and who could provide comfort for families in distress. While it was all very well in theory to speak of a lower level of education for clergy, in practice it was impossible to provide young men in two or three years of study with the requisite skills and knowledge to lead a congregation. Wheeler, as noted, had been among the vocal opponents of the higher education provided at Bebek Seminary. Ironically, his work strongly benefited from the skills of two outstanding Protestant preachers in Eastern Turkey during the second half of the nineteenth century who were Bebek graduates and had gone on for graduate studies to Basle, Switzerland, before returning home "to their small villages." The Reverend Mardiros Shimavonian, pastor of the Kharpert church, and the Reverend Thomas Boyajian, pastor of the Diarbekir church, were both ordained during the early years of the Wheeler mission; and although both men, particularly Boyajian, had bitter disputes with Wheeler over the years, they provided strong leadership within the local Protestant community.

Wheeler, however, insisted at first on the feasibility of preparing clergy with a lower level of education, and he was soon to have the opportunity of putting his theory into practice. The first Protestant seminary in the interior of Anatolia had been established in Tocat. Disputes over the supervision of the seminary and over the curriculum hampered the operation of the school; and when it was "providentially" burned in 1859, the decision was made to move it to Kharpert. Paradoxically, in view of his opposition to over-educating potential clergymen, Wheeler now took as a first step the expansion of the seminary course from three to four years. He justified this action by explaining that students studied only seven-and-one-half months of the year and spent the remaining months teaching and preaching in the villages during the winter when the people were at home and not working in the fields. There were twenty-four pupils in the Kharpert Seminary in 1861, the next year (after the new church/seminary building had been erected) the number grew to thirty-nine students. In 1864 the seminary celebrated its first graduating class

of eighteen men, and by 1868 there were thirty-two graduates in service as pastors or helpers.[23]

The curriculum was based on the Bible as the basic text. Students studied the Armenian language and grammar, mathematics, geography, astronomy, chemistry, church history, and natural, mental, and moral philosophy. In the third year they concentrated on theology and in the fourth year on preaching. Students were allowed a cost-of-living stipend of sixty-four cents per week if single, a dollar and twelve cents if married. "We do not profess poverty and inability to give them more, but frankly tell them that our object is to secure men who are willing and expect to make sacrifice for Christ," Wheeler explained.[24]

The major aim, according to Wheeler, was to imbue the pupils with an earnest and Christian spirit. In 1867 he once again expressed his hostility to higher education in the following passage, which illustrates as well one of the least attractive characteristics of the missionaries, their arrogance and condescension; the native Armenians are considered incapable of reaching the level of "educated men in enlightened communities."

> Next to this, our greatest care has been not to educate them *too much*, so as to raise them too far above their own people and destroy their sympathy with them. . . . It is impossible to educate them into the position and feeling of educated men in enlightened communities; and the attempt to do so only fills them with conceit, which is all the worse because acquired at foreign expense.[25]

During his first decade in Kharpert, Wheeler refused to offer instruction in English, despite the strong desire of Armenian students to learn the language.

> We believed, too, and have acted upon the belief, that the necessary training should be given in their own vernacular, and not in a foreign tongue. Notwithstanding the earnest desire of students to acquire the English language, no instruction in it has been given in the seminary, and we have felt that to teach it would do harm rather than good. Besides consuming time which could be

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[23] Wheeler, *Ten Years*, p. 182.

[24] Ibid., pp. 164-167. That the students did not always agree with him is attested by the fact that they threatened to strike and that the entire sophomore class was expelled in 1877.

[25] Ibid., pp. 176-177.

more usefully devoted to other things, it would expose them to greater temptations.[26]

Establishment of the Theological Seminary in Kharpert raised several perplexing issues concerning the education of women for which the missionaries developed resourceful solutions. Armenians traditionally married off their sons and daughters at a very young age, and therefore a large proportion of the candidates for the seminary were married. The missionaries did not wish to discourage this family orientation (though they opposed marriage of girls younger than fourteen).[27] To insure that the families of potential pastors would exhibit the proper model behavior for the population, it was necessary to educate the wives as well. The need to educate wives of the students provided a major impetus for the establishment of the Female Seminary in Kharpert in 1862, not long after the establishment of the male seminary in 1859. Since many of the student couples had children (some even had grandchildren), it was necessary to establish a nursery as well. In 1868 the Female Seminary enrolled forty-five women—thirty wives, fifteen single women boarders (all of whom had to agree not to marry anyone not a teacher or preacher without the consent of the missionaries), and had eighteen children in the nursery. The basic course for the women included daily Bible study, astronomy (in order to "learn something of God's wisdom and power as displayed in the starry heavens"), arithmetic, catechism, moral philosophy, grammar, reading, writing, and singing.[28]

Returning to the United States on furlough in 1867, Wheeler now found the leisure to reflect upon his experiences in the field and to write a memoir which was entitled *Ten Years on the Euphrates, or Primitive Missionary Policy Illustrated*. The book established Wheeler's reputation as a leading theorist in the missionary field, and it had wide influence in mission circles. At the same time, for many Armenian evangelicals, Wheeler came increasingly to personify the unpopular policy that discouraged higher education, barred instruction in English, and denied native Protestants a role in shaping the programs supported by missionary funds. A striking example of the resulting hostility against Wheeler is found in a letter to the editor published in an Armenian newspaper in Constantinople in 1867, following a lecture Wheeler had given there while on his

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[26] Ibid., p. 178.

[27] Crosby H. Wheeler, *Odds and Ends: or, Gleanings from Missionary Life* (Boston and Chicago: Congregational Publishing Society, 1888), p. 99.

[28] Crosby H. Wheeler, "Harpoot Mission Premises, No. 2," *Missionary Herald* 64:2 (February 1868), pp. 41-46.

way to the United States. Apparently on this occasion Wheeler had repeated his opposition to higher education for Armenians and stated, among other things, that "knowledge is a hurtful thing." The authors of the letter, in the following passage, excoriate Wheeler's views, while at the same time expressing strong admiration for American values such as "freedom of thought and opinion," "liberty," and "truth":

> Mr. Editor, we cannot see why Mr. Wheeler deems "knowledge hurtful," except only because it enlightens the mind, and makes it an enemy, unto death, of blind submission, injustice, and wrong. Such men as he, can love neither the spread of light, nor the consequent freedom of thought and opinion, for then the only language of the people ceases to be "your will be done!" Shame! We might have looked for such a spirit, in a man brought up in Spain, but never in one hailing from a land, that has poured the blood of thousands of her sons for liberty and truth.

The sentiment among the Armenians that the missionaries had broken their promises and betrayed a trust by refusing to provide opportunities for higher education is well illustrated in the following passage in the same publication:

> What has become of the missionaries' splendid promises, made to us when they exhorted us to take the first step? They are now afraid of our knowing too much; they have shut up the schools—they persecute intelligent, useful, and popular laborers, and they have put us in an abject and suffering condition.[29]

Developing an Educational System

There is no evidence that such verbal attacks by disappointed Armenians had any effect on Wheeler. As his wife wrote of him a decade later, when he was facing criticism from his fellow missionaries and from the Board, "He likes praise instead of blame, but neither hinders him from what he resolves to do."[30] Upon his return to Kharpert at the end of 1868, however, Wheeler was forced to confront the unintended conse-

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[29] The article was signed "The Protestant Armenians" and a footnote explained that its statement referred "only to the younger missionaries, and not to the first or older missionaries of the Board." Papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 1, Documents, Reports (1860-1871), #125.

[30] Susan Wheeler, Letter dated March 7, 1880, in ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 9.

quences of the success of the mission's educational programs. He looked at the situation from a practical point of view, and he did not let his earlier beliefs dictate his conclusions. It was clear that students who had been taught the basics of reading and writing now wanted to learn more, and that literate parishioners and parents were demanding ever more highly qualified teachers and pastors.

Wheeler's firm belief that the long-range purpose of the missionaries should be to create self-supporting local institutions and to train personnel to staff these institutions, dictated a new emphasis on secondary and higher education to prepare such personnel, an emphasis Wheeler had earlier opposed. To meet the pressing demand, the Kharpert station in 1869 instituted a special seven-and-a-half-month summer program to train teachers. The ease with which the first graduates, twenty-nine young men in all, found employment led to the decision that the program should be expanded. The Kharpert Station now began to mute its criticism of higher education. For example, the 1869 Station report suggested that higher education must be viewed within the context of supply and demand. The previous policy had been "to keep our hands upon the intellectual pulse of the field, and furnish facilities for *higher* education just so fast as there is a craving for it." The report concluded that "the growing intelligence of the people seemed to demand a step in advance, and this has been taken in the formation of a normal school." The same spirit suggested that admission standards be raised for the theological school and that additional summer training, including the English language, be provided for pastors already in the field.[31] Thus Wheeler and his associates were taking the first steps not simply to advocate, but to create, higher educational institutions.

The Teachers School (Normal School) enjoyed great success from the start. By 1873, when enrollment had risen to fifty-seven, it had registered "a notable advance" in educational quality. By 1877 the enrollment had increased to 100 students.

> The people are gradually acquiring *juster views of the value of education, and are beginning to desire a higher standard. We endeavor to keep in advance of this sentiment, and even to stimulate it. . .* [emphasis added]. The standard of education in our seminaries and other schools is yearly advancing. From the

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[31] Kharpert Report for 1869, excerpts printed in *Missionary Herald* 66:9 (September 1870), p. 288.

> outset we have aimed to devise such an educational system as should reach, as far as possible, the whole population.[32]

Notably absent in this statement is any trace of the Anderson policy to limit educational opportunities to the children of the already converted or of Wheeler's earlier opposition to higher education.

During the 1870s Wheeler and the other Americans continued to review, reevaluate, and expand the educational system that they had established, with its network of local community schools, the Teachers School, the Female Seminary, and the Theological Seminary. It is not clear precisely when or how the idea arose of placing a college at the head of this educational network. Partly it must have been a realization that a true Protestant community needs a developed educational system to thrive. Partly it must have been a response to the demands of the local Armenian population for higher education. Partly it must have reflected the Kharpert missionaries' sense of competition with the other mission fields in Turkey where colleges were being established. Wheeler was a fierce competitor with his colleagues in other missions and a sharp critic of the other American colleges being formed during these years. Robert College in the Turkish capital, with Hamlin at its head, was too secular, Wheeler asserted, while Aintab was so far behind Kharpert in its educational level that the planned college there made no sense.[33]

The Development of the College in Kharpert

The first mention of a college in Kharpert, as opposed to a seminary, appears in the station report for 1873, which rejected the idea.[34] A short two years later, however, the same station approved of a plan for Wheeler to return to the United States in order to oversee the legal arrangements for the organization of Armenia College (later to be renamed Euphrates College) and to raise the initial $60,000 endowment needed for its establishment. The incorporation of the college in the Commonwealth of

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[32] Kharpert Report for 1873, excerpts in *Missionary Herald* 70:9 (September 1874), pp. 276-277. Also, *Missionary Herald* 73:9 (September 1877), p. 284, and 73:10 (October 1877), p. 304.

[33] See for example Wheeler's letter of May 30, 1872, in which he complained that not a single student could be found in Aintab who knew where China or Japan were located, while Kharpert had hundreds of students well versed in such information. Aintab's educational system was several years behind Kharpert's, he wrote, and Kharpert needs another five to eight years "before a college will rise on our hill." ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 5, #187.

[34] Annual Report of the Eastern Turkey Mission, June 16, 1873, ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 3, #39.

Massachusetts proved easier than raising the endowment, but by 1878 sufficient funds had been committed to permit Wheeler to return to Kharpert in his new capacity as president of the College, a role to which he devoted his considerable energies until his retirement in 1893, a period of 15 years.[35]

In practice, therefore, by 1880 conditions in Kharpert had convinced the evangelist Wheeler to become the educator Wheeler, to take the lead in establishing a network of secondary and higher educational institutions, a development he had earlier opposed. While at first the educational level of the College cannot have been comparable to American colleges of the time, it was constantly increasing.[36] There was no longer any question in Wheeler's mind about the importance of teaching English. Not only was English increasingly in demand by the students, it was also the most practical means of providing higher education. Armenian-language textbooks were either non-existent or inadequate for many of the subjects taught, and preparing such textbooks was beyond the capability of a shrinking missionary force.

While Armenian continued to be the language of instruction in the College, the teaching of English gradually expanded from the top and finally reached into the lower grades. English was not the only foreign language taught. It is interesting to find the educator who opposed the teaching of English as being unnecessary for his students now arguing before skeptical administrators in Boston in favor of adding Latin and Greek to a course of study that included instruction in French, English, Armenian, Turkish, and some Persian and Arabic.[37]

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[35] Wheeler's letters written during his return to the United States in 1875 to 1878 complain of his difficulties in raising the endowment. See ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 5, #239 - #333. The $60,000 endowment was designed to cover the costs of the president and teaching staff and was completed only in 1881, when the college became a beneficiary of the estate of Valeria G. Stone (*The Harpoot News*, January 1, 1881, in ABCFM Papers, Miscellaneous Papers Relating to the Near East Missions, ABC 16.5, #66).

These sources do not support the assertion by Stone (*Academies for Anatolia*, p. 171) that Wheeler raised over $140,000 during his fundraising tour or that the Kharpert Armenian community contributed anywhere near the sum of $40,000 by 1878. So straitened were the College finances at first that Wheeler charged his salary as president not to the College but to the ABCFM, much to the dismay of the latter.

[36] Wheeler reported in 1884 that the sophomores were more advanced in their studies than the seniors had been four years earlier. Wheeler, Letter dated February 27, 1884, ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 9, (Part 2), #446.

[37] Wheeler, Letter dated Dec. 22, 1880, ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 9, #393.

The closest Wheeler came to explaining his change of course in writing can be found in a letter sent to Boston in September 1879 in which he explicitly recognizes the importance of higher education in creating a truly Christian community:

> But while as an *original* [emphasis added] instrument of missionary labor I now as much as ever disapprove of a college, I believe it to be an essential means of securing to Christianity the permanence and extension of that influence which had been gained by our own antecedent direct missionary labor.[38]

What Wheeler seems to be admitting here is that the conversion of a population to evangelical Christianity places into motion a process that demands a well-educated populace in order to build and to secure a Christian community. Recognition of Wheeler's change of heart came from his old adversary, the missionary educator Cyrus Hamlin, who now noted that the demand for higher education by the Armenians had overcome the misguided theories of the Anderson supporters such as Wheeler. Hamlin wrote in 1880:

> The first, consistent, persevering opposition of the native element compelled Marsovan and even Kharpert, after years of useless and injurious resistance, to abandon "vernacular education" as the highest to which men may aspire. Mr. Wheeler's conversion is one of the remarkable events of Missionary labor. It seems to be genuine and thorough, but it costs too much. This long contest over education, although the native brethren have won the field in principle, has left a root of bitterness, which has not been eradicated to this day. It is still believed by many that the mission is hostile to education, and the present change is hypercritical![39]

The colleges now being established by the Americans in Anatolia were legally separate from the ABCFM and had their own charters and boards of trustees. But for the most part they were governed by the same individuals who administered the ABCFM, raising many tangled questions of

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[38] Wheeler, Letter dated September 13 1879, ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.7.9), Vol. 3, #345.

[39] Letter from Hamlin to J.R. Bradford, Esq., dated January 3, 1880, and printed as an appendix to the pamphlet "Extracts from the Minutes of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Bithynia Union, Held at Constantinople, May 12-25, 1881."

jurisdiction both at home and in the field.[40] The College in Kharpert was distinct from the others because it now encompassed a total educational system, with four units: primary, secondary, preparatory (the former Teachers School), and college, for a total of fourteen years of education.

The college, itself, was the apex of a regional educational system which included high schools in the major centers of the Eastern Turkey mission (Arabkir, Diarbekir, Geghi, Palu, Hooeli, Malatia, and Mezireh). Specific conditions were laid down for the establishment of a high school in any town or city to be associated with the college: the center must have an Evangelical church and a school for both boys and girls; the high school must be on a level with the college preparatory department, use the same textbooks, and have daily bible lessons; and the teachers must receive a minimum salary of $8.80 per month.[41]

An important distinguishing feature of Armenia College was the fact that it was coeducational. This did not mean that the sexes were mixed in classes—quite the contrary, their buildings were completely separate—but that women's education was integrated into the overall structure. One of the Wheelers' major struggles during this period had been to advance the level of women's education, if not to be on a par with that of the men, then at least to be on a college level.

Wheeler's efforts to advance women's education were facilitated with the return to Kharpert of his daughter, Emily, following her education in the United States (including study for one year at Wellesley College), who now began to teach in the Women's College, and by the appointment of Mary L. Daniels as principal. A notable breakthrough in education for women came in 1881, when for the first time in the Kharpert field, in the village of Yegheki, a woman was appointed to teach at a coeducational primary school. This offered a concrete demonstration to the Armenians of the usefulness of female education, Wheeler asserted.[42] Originally one of the more controversial aspects of missionary programs in Turkey, the higher education of women nonetheless received a surprisingly high level of acceptance in the Armenian community.

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[40] Stone, *Academies for Anatolia*, Chapter 8, pp. 169-184.

[41] H.N. Barnum, Letter dated April 13, 1881, ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey (ABC 16.7.9), Vol. 7, #12.

[42] Wheeler, Letter dated February 10, 1881, ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABCFM 16.7.9), Vol. 9, #400. In the same letter Wheeler complained that higher education for women was viewed with some skepticism by members of the mission, including Caroline E. Bush, the principal of the school, and N.H. Barnum, his longtime colleague.

New Attitudes: New Problems

By the 1880s, the Rufus Anderson policy of limiting education had been repudiated by the ABCFM,[43] if not explicitly, then certainly in practice. However, the closing of such respected institutions as Bebek Seminary in Constantinople had left a distrust of the missionaries in Armenian circles that had not been erased when a new crisis erupted.[44] A general review of the situation in the Turkish empire conducted by the Prudential Committee in 1881 concluded that the original object of the mission had been achieved, namely to organize an evangelical community "large enough to illustrate to the old Armenian church, as well as to the Moslems, a true evangelical faith" and to establish "institutions for the higher Christian education of youth and for the proper training of preachers and teachers to take up and carry forward the enterprise thus begun by Christians from abroad." The work in Turkey might now be placed in the hands of the Armenians, so that the "attention [of the Board] could be properly turned more fully to other races and to other parts of the world."[45] The official ABCFM historian explained that among the Armenians "Evangelical Christianity was thoroughly acclimated and vigorous," as evidenced by nearly 100 churches with over 6,000 members, thirty-nine schools of higher learning, and over 1,000 young men securing higher education.[46]

The attempt of the missionaries to withdraw from Turkey and to place upon the Armenian community the full responsibility for religious and educational programs could not but be viewed as a betrayal by the Armenians. One angry and disappointed Armenian wrote:

> The society which has undertaken to assist us has for its sole aim the immediate salvation of souls. . . . We wish to cultivate our minds, educate our children, and, while they become children of God, to liberate them from the iron yoke of extreme poverty; we desire to be a well-to-do community, that we may do greater

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[43] See, for example, Strong, *The American Board*, p. 224.

[44] The different opinions of the missionaries and the Armenians are given in the "Report of the Special Committee on the Turkish Missions," presented at the Annual Meeting of the ABCFM on October 3, 1883, and printed in the ABCFM *Annual Report*, 1883, pp. xxv-lviii.

[45] "Memorandum for the Missions in the Turkish Empire, and Recommendations," Prepared by the Prudential Committee in April 1881 and printed with the ABCFM Annual Report for 1882, pp. lxvi-lxvii.

[46] Strong, *The American Board*, p. 385.

> things for the glory of God. If the missionaries would think like us on this point, the difficulty would speedily be overcome.[47]

In fact, the Americans did not make good their threat to withdraw from the Armenian field, and this debate served only exacerbate Armenian mistrust of the Americans. There is no record that Wheeler participated in this debate, preoccupied as he was with the growth of the new College. But the shock waves of the dispute in the capital reached Kharpert, and many local Armenians who had been critical of the missionaries now rose to their defense. If Wheeler took any satisfaction from these expressions of local support, the records do not show it. The missionary-educator concentrated his attention on the needs of his College.

More serious difficulties arose from the growing poverty and lawlessness in the area. Though it had never really flourished commercially during the nineteenth century, the Kharpert region experienced a further economic decline during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. The more impoverished the population became, the more the government intensified efforts to collect taxes, which in turn further impoverished the people. There seemed to be no relief from this downward economic cycle, which was aggravated by several years of famine. Typical of reports from Eastern Turkey at the time, Wheeler noted in 1882 that he had never seen before in his twenty-five years in Turkey such poverty and distressing conditions.[48]

The Russo-Turkish War also contributed to increasing lawlessness in the area, which intensified after the war. In 1875, missionary nerves had been shattered when their servant, Manazar, who accompanied the Wheeler party as far as Trebizond on its return to the United States that year, was murdered on his way back to Kharpert. At no time during the past twenty years had the countryside been so unsafe, the missionaries reported.[49] Missionary circumspection demanded that not too much be made of such incidents in their reports: when the missionaries from Erzerum on the way to the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Turkish Mission in 1879 were robbed by the Kurds, the meeting minutes recorded laconically: "The Treasurer's Report and the Annual Tabular View, being in the

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[47] Quoted in "Report of the Special Committee," p. xliii.

[48] Excerpts from the Annual Report for Armenia College, *Missionary Herald* (1882), p. 63.

[49] The murderer was shot dead by the Kurds who went out to arrest him the next day, but his accomplice escaped. O.P. Allen, Letter dated December 29, 1875, in ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 3, #54.

hands of the Kurds, were omitted."[50] This circumspection, however, did not keep the missionaries from protesting their grievances to the Ottoman authorities and demanding redress.

Furthermore, interference by the Ottoman government itself was becoming increasingly intense. Indeed, from the beginning, the government officials had been ambivalent in their attitude, alternately praising the College and then placing obstacles in the way of its development, more the latter than the former as time went on. In this matter local officials were following the lead of the central government, which increasingly viewed the American missionary establishment in Turkey as a threat. Although the missionaries claimed their influence to be entirely religious, and although they disavowed any interference in political matters, their emphasis on such Western values as individualism, rationalism, activism, and modernization carried with it obvious political implications which were not lost on Ottoman officials.[51]

In the early days of the College, numerous references can be found to visits by Ottoman officials, both local and from the capital. In one of the first issues of the student newspaper, the following description is given of a visit which took place on March 26, 1879:

> We had a special examination to gratify the following guests: our civil pasha, Abd-ul-Nefi Effendi; the military pasha, Sabrit Mralar (Col.) Osman Bey; and the city cadi; Hadji Hafuz Mahmood Effendi, president of the municipal council; Raschid Effendi, president of the Board of Trade; Mehmet Effendi, president of the Board of Education; Senekerim and Ali Effendis, members of the same board; Asad Bey, from Constantinople, chief secretary of the pashalic; and a number of smaller dignitaries. They spent five hours listening to recitations in the Preparatory Department and the College proper.

The exercises left differing impressions on the guests. The *News* reporter continues:

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[50] Annual Meeting, Eastern Turkey Mission, May 28, 1879, ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 3, #54.

[51] For a discussion of this issue see Joseph L. Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810-1927* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), especially Chapter 2, pp. 35-57. Also Barbara J. Merguerian, "The American Response to the 1895 Massacres," *Journal of Armenian Studies* IV, nos. 1 and 2 (1992), pp. 53-83.

> At the close, the military pasha made some remarks in the course of which he said: "Young men, by and by you will take the place of worthless rulers" (Query, did he mean the present ones?) "You are the pride of our land." The gymnastic exercises with wands took a somewhat military form, whereat he was pleased, but Hadji Hafuz Mahmood Effendi and the cadi little relished seeing Armenians act like soldiers! So they left before the close of the examination.[52]

Despite frequent, and apparently friendly, visits to the campus, government officials harassed the College in numerous ways. In December 1884, an official order to close the College within three months was received, accompanied by a notice of a fine of fifty Turkish pounds for Wheeler's use of a printing press without a permit. When the order to close the College was ignored, the Turkish district school superintendent issued a reminder that the deadline to close the school had passed. Finally, Wheeler was awakened one night by a messenger, who claimed to have "an official order for immediately closing the school," only to find that "a more careful reading of the document revealed the fact that the bearer was mistaken." This continuous threat of official interference, Wheeler admitted, was "not quieting to the nerves."[53]

It took four years of negotiations, most of them taking place in the capital, for the College to receive its official permit from the government in 1887. Approval came only after the Americans agreed to several concessions: chief among these concessions was to change the name of the College from "Armenia," a geographical designation which the Ottoman government refused to recognize, to "Euphrates," referring only to the nearby river; the teachers and textbooks were to be subjected to official Ottoman inspection; several books were prohibited and had to be burned, including *The Manual of History* prepared by missionaries Clark and Maynard; other condemned texts were allowed to be used as long as offending passages were crossed out, including *Studies in English Literature* published by Harper and Brothers;[54] and the thriving printing press es-

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[52] "Harpoot News-Notes: Penned by Students of Armenia College" (1879), ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 3, #77.

[53] Wheeler's correspondence, especially letters dated Dec. 10, 1884; July 23, 1885; and July 31, 1885; ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 9 (Part 2), #458, #467, #468.

[54] C.W. Wheeler, "Euphrates College, at Harpoot," *Missionary Herald* 83:3 (March 1887), pp. 93-95.

tablished at the College also had to be closed.[55] The price of recognition was a heavy hand of government control.

In 1891 the government issued a new requirement. All essays and written addresses on public occasions had to be submitted in advance to censorship. Here again, the College submitted to government authority. During the public examination that year, one young woman, perhaps carried away by the emotion of the moment, added an impromptu sentence to her speech in which she referred to the "glorification of the Cross." The local censor raised a commotion, claiming the sentence involved hidden political intrigue. The matter was settled only after extensive negotiations.[56] The difficulty in obtaining building permits for new College facilities was also an irritant, but it did not appreciably hamper the expansion program of the 1880s that resulted in a new building (named after Valeria G. Stone, whose bequest had financed the construction) for the Women's College, an addition to the College itself, and a new Theological Seminary Building.[57]

New Era of Armenian-Missionary Cooperation

Although the College was obviously an American institution, Wheeler made every effort to identify it with the Armenian population it served. The basic language of instruction, of course, was Armenian. A guiding principle was to engage Armenian professors as faculty and to use the more advanced Armenian students to instruct the younger ones, thus providing them with teaching experience, and saving money from the budget one might add. In the male division, President Wheeler was the only American on the faculty except for the teachers of theology. All of the other professors were Armenians with the further exception of the Turkish-language instructor. The female division was headed by a woman missionary who usually had at least one American assistant in addition to Armenian teaching aides.

The new missionary emphasis on higher education, though it continued to stress evangelical Christianity, succeeded in reducing somewhat the barriers, which had been erected in earlier, more divisive times, between the Armenian Apostolic community and the Armenian Protestant

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[55] Barton, *Daybreak*, p. 202.

[56] H.N. Barnum, "Education at Harpoot, Eastern Turkey," *Missionary Herald* 87:10 (October 1891), pp. 414-415.

[57] James L. Barton, "Euphrates College, Its Possessions and Its Needs," *Missionary Herald* 84:1 (January 1888), pp. 16-18. Theological Seminary Report for 1888, ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 6. No. 85.

community . The growing popularity of the Protestant higher educational system, along with the stimulus for education sweeping the urban centers as a result of influences emanating from Europe, pressured Armenian communities to establish their own, competing institutions. In many cases, however, lacking trained personnel, the Armenians had no choice but to look to the graduates of Protestant schools for instructors. Some Armenian churches went so far as to invite Protestant pastors to preach in their pulpits on Sundays.[58] Invitations to their graduates to teach and preach in Apostolic institutions were welcomed by the Americans. Even in cases where their graduates returned to the Apostolic fold, the missionaries were confident that their Protestant education would leave an indelible mark on their spirit and would bring enlightenment to the church. As missionary James L. Barton expressed it: "An educated man will not long remain in the Old Church as it now is. He will reform the church, leave it for something better, or become an infidel."[59]

Wheeler's reputation as a skilled educator was so highly regarded among the local Armenian Church leaders that for a period in 1884 he was placed in charge of the Apostolic community's high school in Kharpert city, with the responsibility for appointing all of the teachers. This arrangement, of an American Protestant leader having authority in an Armenian Apostolic school, was unheard of in any part of Turkey, Wheeler proudly advised his superiors.[60] The missionaries even took credit for providing pious teachers to the Apostolic Church schools. They claimed that the Apostolic teachers who came from the capital had been subject to secular influences and were unworthy "skeptics and infidels." The Americans saw themselves, accordingly, as protectors of both the Protestant and the Apostolic from "assaults of infidelity."[61]

Despite their emphasis on a Christian education, neither the American higher educational establishments in Kharpert nor those in the other parts of Turkey could stem the tide of secularism sweeping the country. Many Euphrates College graduates did not choose a career in Christian service as teacher or preacher, but rather went into business or the professions. One missionary complained that a "secular, not to say selfish spirit" led

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[58] See for example Annual Report, Kharpert, 1888, *Missionary Herald* 85:10 (October 1889), p. 371.

[59] "Euphrates College, Harpoot: Its Possessions and Its Needs," *Missionary Herald* 84:1 (January 1888), p. 17.

[60] Wheeler, Letters dated Feb. 27, 1884 and March 4, 1884, ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 9 (Part 2), #447 and #448.

[61] Annual Meeting Report, Kharpert, 1881, ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 6, #81.

some young people to attend the Protestant schools purely as a means to self advancement.[62]

One manifestation of this secular, self-interested spirit was the so-called "American fever," the desire of Armenians, many of them educated by the missionaries, to emigrate to the United States. The departure of the most intelligent and enterprising young Armenians to seek their fortunes in America, seriously depleted the ranks of Protestant teachers and preachers at home. Wheeler deplored this exodus of the young, educated, and talented Armenians to the United States: "If I could prevent it not a man would go to the United States at all, *now*, but the fever must have its run."[63] Nevertheless, Wheeler was eager to take advantage of the "American fever" and the accompanying desire to learn English, to bring students to the College, "who would otherwise keep wholly aloof from Protestant evangelical influence."[64]

Declining health forced Wheeler to step down as President of the College in 1893 at the age of 70. As he retired, he could well be satisfied with his accomplishments: Euphrates College had achieved a wide reputation throughout Eastern Turkey as a significant center of learning; the more tolerant attitudes among both Protestants and Apostolics led to a growing acceptance of the College as an Armenian national institution; and the rising competence of students and faculty and the growing achievements of the graduates gave promise of an even brighter future. External circumstances, however, were to prevent Euphrates College from building on these strengths to reach its full potential.

Upon Wheeler's retirement, James L. Barton, D.D., who had arrived in Kharpert a decade earlier, was appointed as president in his place. Barton was unable to assume this position, however, because the illness of his wife had compelled him to return to the United States.[65] A new member of the mission who had been transferred from Mardin to meet the urgent manpower needs in Kharpert, Caleb F. Gates, was named to the vacant post. The new president was immediately caught up in the death and destruction that resulted from the Turkish massacres of Armenians in

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[62] Annual Report, Kharpert, 1889, ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 10, #4.

[63] Wheeler, Letter written in 1880, ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 5, #359.

[64] Report of Euphrates College, September 18, 1889, ABCFM Papers, Eastern Turkey Mission (ABC 16.9.7), Vol. 10, #6.

[65] Barton enjoyed a distinguished career in the United States as Foreign Secretary of the ABCFM and, following World War I, as Executive Director of the Near East Relief.

Kharpert in November of 1895, atrocities which took the lives of faculty and students, destroyed all but four of the College buildings, and left the missionaries exposed and defenseless.[66]

One can only imagine the emotions of the Wheelers when they were caught up in the violent and terrifying days of 1895 and saw their home destroyed, all of their household goods despoiled, and much of the institution to which they had devoted their lives demolished. In May of 1896, the Wheelers reluctantly left the city where they had spent the past forty years of their lives. Crosby Wheeler was carried out on a stretcher. The long journey home was to be painful from a physical as well as from an emotional point of view.

The Wheelers arrived in Auburndale, Massachusetts, at the end of June, 1896. In October of that year, Reverend Crosby H. Wheeler passed away. His obituary in the *Missionary Herald* related:

> It had for years been the expressed desire of Dr. Wheeler that he might die at Kharpert, and be buried in a lot overlooking the college which he had founded. This wish was denied him. But . . . his funeral was made most impressive by the presence of a large body of graduates of Euphrates College, bearing witness to their profound regard for their teacher and friend.[67]

The massacres which destroyed the mission premises in Kharpert in 1895 only stiffened the Americans' determination to carry on their programs. The American missionaries quickly reopened the College and rebuilt the buildings. In two years enrollment was 40% over the pre-massacre level. The College continued grow and serve until 1915, when the genocide of the Armenian people by the Young Turk government of the Ottoman Empire dealt the institution, and the Armenians of Turkey, a fatal blow.[68]

Conclusion

By the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of twentieth century, Americans increasingly embraced broad social and educational programs

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[66] Eyewitness accounts of the 1895 massacres by Kharpert missionaries Herman N. Barnum, Caleb F. Gates, and others can be found in United States, Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1895 (Vol. 2), pp. 1370-1381, and 1896, pp. 888-892. Also ABCFM Papers, Miscellaneous Papers Relating to the Near East Mission (ABC 16.5), Vol. 5, #82-89.

[67] "Rev. Crosby H. Wheeler," *Missionary Herald* 92:11 (November 1896), pp. 440-442.

[68] Stone, *Academies for Anatolia*, pp. 178, 180.

as part of their missionary activities. The value of a higher educational system for a Christian community was no longer in question. No one would argue that "saving souls" could be separated from "cultivating minds." There is no doubt that in the Ottoman Empire the thirst for education and enlightenment among the Armenians pressured the missionaries to offer a much broader and higher level of education than had been anticipated. Nowhere can this process of change be seen more clearly than in the evolution of the views of Crosby H. Wheeler, who was transformed from an opponent of higher education to one of its leading advocates. As his wife Susan wrote: "The missionary who did not believe in higher education as a force to be largely made use of in evangelism, was by circumstances made the founder of Euphrates College."[69]

The effect of missionary programs in Kharpert, as elsewhere, had been to enlarge the horizons of the Armenians, to raise their intellectual level, to foster a philosophy of individualism totally at odds with the autocratic Ottoman system, and to encourage aspirations for a more just, democratic society in which the people could shape their own lives and determine their own destinies. When the Armenians translated these dreams, into concrete political programs, they were bitterly disappointed to find that the missionaries failed to support them. The missionaries argued on the grounds of a strict separation of church and state that they were barred from any interference in domestic Turkish politics.

But the Protestant-educated Armenians had learned their lessons well; and they now joined their compatriots, many of whom had been educated in the universities of Europe, in a broad crusade to achieve the principles of justice, equality, and self-determination which they had learned from their American instructors—principles which only today, over a century later, are finally beginning to be realized by the Armenian people in their small, newly independent homeland in the Caucasus.

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[69] Susan Wheeler, *Missions in Eden*, p. 109.